

FLIPPING THE COIN AND WINNING: LESSONS FROM COLOMBIA

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

FLIPPING THE COIN AND WINNING: LESSONS FROM COLOMBIA

by

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In the late 1990s, Colombia appeared destined for utter collapse. Facing a possible narco-terrorist state releasing a torrent of illegal drugs, the United States supported *Plan Colombia*, a broad effort to bolster police and military Counter-Insurgency (COIN) efforts and reform Colombian governance. President Uribe, driving his Democratic Security program, helped dramatically reverse Colombia's downward trajectory in the eight years since *Plan Colombia*'s inception. Joint, interagency, and combined efforts in Colombia reduced violence, improved the economy, and significantly diminished the size and capability of Colombia's various insurgent groups and paramilitaries. Successes against Colombia's well funded, long standing, committed insurgencies provide useful insights for US and coalition fighters in other theaters. The illicit drug trade remains resilient, despite a coordinated coalition effort to reduce production and trafficking. Lessons learned in Colombia highlight recommendations for other US COIN operations.

FLIPPING THE COIN AND WINNING: LESSONS FROM COLOMBIA

As the 20th century drew to a close, Colombia appeared destined for utter collapse, the victim of more than three decades of insurgent warfare, beset by powerful right-wing paramilitaries, and overrun by illicit drug production and smuggling. Faced with the specter of a Colombian narco-democracy lifting the floodgates on an already enormous torrent of illegal drugs, the United States supported *Plan Colombia*, a broad effort to bolster police and military Counter-Insurgency (COIN) efforts and reform Colombian governance. President Alvaro Uribe Velez, relentlessly driving his Democratic Security program, helped dramatically reverse Colombia's downward trajectory in the eight years since *Plan Colombia*'s inception. Joint, interagency, and combined efforts in Colombia reduced violence, improved the economy, and significantly diminished the size and capability of Colombia's various insurgent groups and paramilitaries. Successes against Colombia's well funded, long standing, committed insurgencies could provide useful insights for American and coalition fighters in the long war against terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan. The illicit drug trade's stubborn resilience, despite a coordinated coalition effort, highlights limitations which may parallel those in other theaters. Less than a decade ago, Colombia's prospects for peace seemed less likely than winning a coin toss. Today they are beating those odds, restoring peace, prosperity, and democracy against the will of several committed, insurgent, terrorist groups.

History's Counterinsurgency Lessons

Insurgent movements have sought to overturn governments for centuries, but after World War II, several COIN veterans exchanged their pistols for pens, describing

their theories of insurgent warfare. Representing different nationalities and varied experience in the field, these authors provide useful insights into insurgencies, explain their strategies, and prescribe actions to effectively fight them. They describe COIN efforts in China, Malaya, Cuba, Algeria, and Vietnam. Many of their observations and recommendations have survived the test of time, others are rejected. Their theories and recommendations, applied to the Colombian situation, provide lessons applicable to other COIN campaigns.

French Army Colonel Roger Trinquier, veteran of the French counterinsurgencies in Vietnam and Algeria, penned *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* to describe the French experiences. He knew personally of what he wrote; he first parachuted into Vietnam in 1947¹ and by 1953 his exceptional work placed him in wartime command of 20,000 fighting men.² In Vietnam, however, the communist insurgents refused to be drawn into open combat. Hunting the furtive enemy in the jungles was akin to using a “pile driver trying to crush a fly.”³

Trinquier understood the insurgent, his style of warfare, and he offers suggestions for successful counterinsurgency. He recognized that, from the insurgents’ viewpoint, the insurgency must manipulate the population to support the insurgent and his cause, and rally other opposition groups against the government in charge.⁴ The insurgent draws strength from the terrain he inhabits. The local population provides logistics and intelligence support. The insurgent will select a battlefield that provides an asymmetric advantage, one that minimizes or altogether prevents government forces from using modern transportation and aircraft support, stripping the modern force of their clearest advantage in the field. Removed from the land he knows so well, the

insurgent will be exposed as a mediocre fighter at best.⁵ Accordingly, Trinquier dictated three principles of counterinsurgency: (1) isolate the insurgent from the population that sustains him, (2) drive the guerrillas from their territory, and finally (3) hold a large area for a long time.⁶ His methods, Trinquier suggested, would “never achieve spectacular results,” but would eventually bring victory over an insurgency.⁷

Sir Robert Thompson, the British leader in the war in Malaya and COIN advisor for US efforts in Vietnam, wrote eloquently of his education in the counterinsurgency arts. Although obviously shaped by Trinquier, Thompson more clearly defined the insurgents’ aims and prescribed more detailed, tactical COIN guidance. Insurgencies following Mao’s Communist Chinese model would “adopt causes which appear legitimate, progressive, and desirable.”⁸ Operating in remote, rural communities, communists would use any grievance (such as corruption or lack of services) as leverage against the government. If they seize control, they reduce taxes to curry favor among the population.⁹ Taking control of safe sanctuary areas, the guerrilla will then attack military and police outposts to seize weapons, gain prestige, and undermine confidence in the government. Covert cells in the community provide recruits, logistics, and intelligence support to the communists’ local armed units and larger, mobile units.¹⁰ The armed units remain dispersed in rough and inaccessible terrain, concentrating only to initiate an attack. If they encounter government forces, the guerrillas break contact and melt away into their protective terrain features. Guerrilla victories further undermine popular confidence in the government and bolster support for the insurgency. The insurgents quickly recruit to reconstitute any losses.¹¹

As Mao suggested, “the guerrilla must be to the population as little fishes in water.”¹² Thompson recognized that one could be both “a peasant by day and a guerrilla by night.”¹³ When government troops enter suspect villages, find nothing, and get no help, if their mounting frustration results in rash action, the insurgents will capitalize on the propaganda opportunity. Therefore, “by creating more communists than they kill, (they) become in effect communist recruiting drives.”¹⁴ Recognizing that insurgent warfare targets public confidence, Thompson focuses on these motivational issues. When guerrillas evade a government operation, but the government claims victory nonetheless, the troops are dismayed, guerrillas encouraged, and recruiting numbers climb as the population increasingly believes the insurgents words, promises, and cause instead of the government. Low-level insurgent warfare continues escalating, gaining power largely by seizing weapons until the guerrillas can initiate a war of movement or until the government decides to negotiate a peace.¹⁵

Thompson dictated COIN strategy against communist guerrillas. First, the besieged government must “have a clear political aim: to establish and maintain a free, independent, and united country which is politically and economically stable and viable.” The government must also address what the communists label societal “contradictions,” such as corruption. Second, the government must operate within the law, specifically noting that “detention is perhaps one of the most controversial powers which a government may exercise.” Third, “government must have an overall plan” to address not only security but also “political, social, economic, administrative, police and other measures.” Fourth, the government must prioritize “defeating the political subversion, not the guerrilla.” Finally, during an insurgency’s guerrilla phase, a “government must

secure its base areas first;” the reverse is true during the initial phase when the government should counter with security and economic measures in remote areas.¹⁶

In addition to his clear view of insurgency and concise methodology for counterinsurgency, Thompson offers several guidelines from his experience. In a strategy paraphrased as, “Clear, Hold, Winning, Won;”¹⁷ Thompson suggests “clearing” insurgents from an area is likely counterproductive unless the government has the means and will to “hold” that area, restoring government authority and instilling security.¹⁸ “Winning” is a matter of good governance, with consideration for health, education, “improved livelihood and standard of living,” and improved transportation infrastructure.¹⁹ Since insurgency is largely fueled by a population’s discontent, military discipline is critical. Thompson noted that the Vietnamese army failed in the “vital aspect” of “good, strict disciplined behavior toward its own population.”²⁰ Regarding amnesty, it should not be offered too soon, since the terms can be released later but are difficult to retract once publicly acknowledged.²¹ Additionally, when granting amnesty, government forces should avoid using terms such as “surrender” and “prisoner of war,” since these terms are pejorative and will make the former insurgent feel deceived.²²

David Galula, a French Army veteran of World War II, experienced the Chinese Revolution during Attaché service in Hong Kong and later served in Algeria from 1956-1958 during the Algerian war of independence.²³ Paraphrasing Clausewitz, Galula defined insurgency as “the pursuit of the policy of a party, inside a country, by every means;”²⁴ a protracted, methodical struggle to overthrow the current order.²⁵ Whereas Mao described insurgent warfare from the guerrilla’s perspective, Galula’s descriptions add the COIN view,²⁶ heavily influenced by his experience in China.

Galula reiterates Mao's doctrine, more clearly than Thompson, demonstrating familiarity bred from longer exposure and no doubt influenced by his capture and brief detention by Maoist revolutionaries.²⁷ The orthodox insurgency begins with establishing a political party and uniting with like-minded allies, even those whose divergent ideology will require their separation later.²⁸ Galula defines these first two phases as the "cold revolution," because although the insurgents' ideology and formation are established, the actual fighting has not yet begun.²⁹ The insurgent movement then begins guerrilla warfare, steadily building strength until capable of movement warfare and, finally, an annihilation campaign to overthrow the government.³⁰ These three phases together constitute, the "hot revolution."³¹

Switching to the government perspective, Galula describes four COIN courses of action, all or any combination of which may be employed. The government may choose direct action against the insurgency, indirect action influencing the population, infiltrating the insurgency, or "strengthening the political machine."³²

Galula describes these courses of action with varying degrees of detail. In (1) acting directly against the insurgent leadership, the action must be strictly legal or it risks encouraging the insurgency's cause. Any legal trial will catapult the clash of ideologies to the national stage. He suggests that this approach works especially well if the insurgents' cause has little popular appeal and the government can prevent the insurgents' access to publicity.³³ Next, the government may (2) act indirectly by addressing those conditions which initially bred the insurgency, usually by conducting judicial reform, augmenting policing efforts, streamlining and focusing the government bureaucracy on the country's basic problems.³⁴ Galula suggests (3) infiltrating the

insurgency and bringing about its destruction from within is quite possible with a relatively newly-formed insurgency. However, he cautions that infiltration operations become increasingly difficult as the movement matures.³⁵ Finally, he suggests (4) strengthening the political machine itself. Galula explicitly refuses to explain this beyond vaguely suggesting that the “peacetime political machine is built essentially on patronage.”³⁶

Galula’s strategic discussion of insurgency and COIN methods are clear and relatively concise, but he offers few new specific details regarding COIN tactics, techniques, and procedures. In stark contrast to Trinquier, Galula demands that prisoners must be treated well, as he himself was when captured by the communist Chinese.³⁷ In contrast, the nationalist Chinese so distrusted the communists that 5,000 nationalist prisoners, released by the communist insurgents were then sequestered in a camp to prevent them from “contaminating” the army.³⁸ When captured and briefly held by communist Chinese insurgents, Galula accepted and published their stated aims without apparent question or comment,³⁹ calling his own objectivity into question.⁴⁰ Galula suggested a light and highly adaptive military for COIN warfare, and suggested that the military itself would often become the instrument of government support in the field, providing medical services and administering governance in recently-captured insurgent areas.⁴¹ His suggestion to administer a census and issue identification cards within former insurgent areas⁴² echoes Trinquier and Thompson’s strategic hamlet concept.

Although their collective writings establish a firm foundation for traditional COIN theory, Trinquier, Thompson, and Galula each missed the mark in some way. Although

respected for his insights into counterinsurgency warfare, Trinquier also advocated torture, albeit through references to “more stringent interrogation”⁴³ and other non sequiturs. He proposed that a captured terrorist cannot be treated like a criminal or a prisoner of war. Invoking “women and children” as frequent terrorism victims, Trinquier advocated interrogating captured suspects to identify the terrorist leadership and organization. “No lawyer is present for such an interrogation. If the prisoner gives the information requested, the examination is quickly terminated; if not, specialists must force his secrets from him. Then, as a soldier, he must face the suffering, and perhaps the death, he has heretofore managed to avoid.”⁴⁴ Steadfastly defending torture as a useful tool, Trinquier recalled the French knights who, holding to a point of honor, refused to employ long bows against the English in the battles of Crécy⁴⁵ in 1346 and Agincourt⁴⁶ in 1415. The English bore no such misplaced burden of honor and used their bows to huge success, massacring the French army both times. Highlighting pragmatism versus outdated codes of honor, Triquier advocated using “all the means of modern warfare.”⁴⁷ Supporting torture stained his legacy and risked tainting any who dare cite his otherwise useful, even remarkable insights and suggestions.

Trinquier also first advocated and Thompson supported the heavy-handed “strategic hamlet” concept whereby civilian populations in insurgent-dominated areas were forcefully relocated and carefully monitored to isolate the guerrilla’s from their popular support.⁴⁸ Trinquier directed that everyone in the hamlet should be interrogated to identify suspect insurgents; these suspects were subjected to “more stringent interrogation” to identify still more insurgents and their structure.⁴⁹ He advocated supporting these strategic hamlets with “practical projects,” such as road construction

and repair, education projects, and encouraging economic development.⁵⁰ In a contest of wills which Trinquier explained the enemy would use “any conflict liable to have a profound influence on the population,”⁵¹ he somehow missed the fact that destroying villagers’ houses, shelters, crops, and food and forcing them from their lands would have a profound impact. France’s decision to torture suspects fostered Algerian Franco phobia; forced displacement compounded the tension. In Algeria alone, over two million poor farmers were forced from their farms and exiled to camps where they lived in squalor.⁵² Despite France’s military victory, the Algerian population soon voted almost unanimously for independence from France.⁵³

Although Trinquier’s stubborn insistence on torture as a valid tool taints his record as a visionary COIN theorist, he nonetheless clearly understood insurgency and COIN operations. His 1964 description of guerrilla tactics reads eerily like eyewitness accounts of actions by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)⁵⁴ more than three decades later. He wrote that the countryside, especially mountainous terrain, allowed little protection for the legitimate population. Here the insurgent could carry out “a few brutalities, such as savagely executed preventative assassinations,” to encourage the population to provide authorities with no useful data, while surreptitiously supporting the insurgents.⁵⁵ Trinquier noted that timid police patrols often fell to the insurgent cause, further fueling the insurgents’ political momentum. Eventually, “immense zones” will be abandoned to the guerrillas, allowing them free reign.⁵⁶ This is exactly the case with the FARC.

Although these classics of COIN literature remain useful for study and guidance, they must be studied critically for their continued application to modern insurgencies as

four decades have passed since Trinquier, Thompson, and Galula set pens to paper. Consider, for example, that Trinquier advocated placing anti-personnel mines along guerrilla trails where ambushes were not feasible.⁵⁷ First, the world has changed since 1964. Thirty years after Trinquier wrote about COIN, 122 nations including Colombia ratified the Mine Ban Treaty.⁵⁸ Although he states that mines should be placed in the evening and recovered the next day, one must question his sincerity since he's already determined the area is not suitable for an ambush ... how then could it be suitable for COIN forces to visit it twice within 24 hours? Colombia ranks third in the world for deaths caused by mines. Placing more mines is both politically foolhardy and against international treaty.⁵⁹

A more enduring lesson is Thompson's admonition to track weapons. He notes that insurgents could not legally purchase weapons and would attack government forces to arm themselves. Tracking weapons captured and lost by the government was more useful than tracking insurgent killed or captured. Guerrillas could be replaced by recruiting from the local population – weapons were far more difficult to obtain.⁶⁰ Although modern terrorists craft by hand some of their weapons, controlling and tracking any required sub element could serve the purpose of measuring trends in insurgents' strength.

Trinquier and Galula's theories have not aged gracefully. Admittedly, both explain well the Maoist approach to revolution and the COIN methods they advocate for suppressing such guerrilla movements. However, Trinquier's unrepentant advocacy of torture undermines his book's utility. Galula dwells too long in the ethereal, lacking sufficiently detailed guidance or disconnected from it altogether to be of greater modern

value. For example, Galula advocates employing COIN forces in concentric circles to trap insurgents between rings.⁶¹ Although theoretically sound, the guerrilla knows the terrain far better than the government forces and uses this advantage to great effect. Like the US in Vietnam, Colombia has encircled insurgent elements, but in difficult terrain the insurgents easily slipped away. Trinquier admits that although he, too, advocates trying a blockade-type COIN approach, this methodology is rarely effective.⁶² In the final analysis, it's noted shortcomings notwithstanding, Sir Thompson's "Defeating Communist Insurgency" best explains the necessary mindset for approaching COIN operations and provides tactical and operational insights of enduring value.

Colombia's Troubled History

Class strife and extended periods of bloodshed stain many chapters of Colombia's history. The Spanish colonial era left an inefficient government focused on stability within an economically stratified society. One crop, coffee, dominated the economy, making it prone to extreme fluctuation. After independence, two competing groups, the Liberals and Conservatives, fought over and traded power. The advent of 20th century communications exposed rural poor to the polarity of their "political, economic, and social plight."⁶³ A steadily rising groundswell of popular discontent swept Jorge Eliecer Gaitan to lead the Liberal party. His 1948 assassination in Bogota sparked the *Bogotazo*, a massive uprising which killed as many as 10,000 in the capital alone, left the city in ruins, and sparked *La Violencia*, 16 years of violent bloodshed and recrimination throughout Colombia.⁶⁴ The class divisions, already deeply embedded in Colombian society, were etched in blood; the Colombian National Police would not protect and occasionally even attacked the Liberals, and liberal members of the largely

conservative Colombian Army defected to the plains and mountains.⁶⁵ By 1964, when *La Violencia* finally ended, more than 200,000 were dead; many more than that had been displaced from their land and their church.⁶⁶

Marxist Guerrillas, Right-Wing Paramilitaries, and Drug Lords. Outside the cities, Communist revolutionaries sought to expand Cuba's successful revolution into the Colombian countryside. Colombia provided fertile soil for communism, which "preyed upon human hopes."⁶⁷ Purporting to represent the working class, communists actually instituted a centralized, elitist, and authoritative rule.⁶⁸ Manuel Marulanda Velez, alias *Tirofijo*, formally established the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)RC in 1962, after fighting for the Colombia Communist Party in *La Violencia*.⁶⁹ The National Liberation Army (ELN)⁷⁰ and other, smaller, leftist groups⁷¹ also organized over time against the government.

In 1981, Colombian president Julio Turbay identified a potential escape from the cycle of violence. He offered the guerrillas amnesty, lifting a state of siege. The FARC numbered approximately 1,000 fighters, the ELN and EPL a few hundred each. There was no decisive defeat and the guerrillas could keep their uniforms and weapons. The FARC formed a political party, the *Unión Patriótica (UP)*, and many guerrillas demobilized. When the UP presidential candidate was assassinated, the FARC rearmed.⁷²

In the 1980s, the FARC turned to the burgeoning drug trade to finance its operations.⁷³ Against the rising, drug-fueled, leftist tide, the first of 130 right-wing paramilitary organizations formed in 1987. Originally funded by cattle and farming interests, they, too, used drugs as a major source of income.⁷⁴ The paramilitaries

became infamous for killing civilians they believed supported left-wing guerrillas.⁷⁵ In the 1988 mayoral elections, death squads killed 600 *UP* members, including 16 mayoral candidates.⁷⁶

Enter Uribe, Humble Hero. Alvaro Uribe Velez stepped upon this tortured national stage an unlikely hero. Raised alongside some of the Medellin Cartel's infamous drug barons⁷⁷, his father was assassinated by kidnappers⁷⁸ from the FARC. Uribe could easily have turned to Colombia's illegal drugs or political violence. Instead, bespectacled and slight of build, Uribe distinguished himself academically, accepted scholarship grants for study abroad, then returned to begin a Colombian political career.

Rising through the political ranks, Uribe served as mayor of Medellin and in several lesser positions. As governor of Antioquia, however, Uribe brought new vision to leadership, cutting thousands of unnecessary jobs from Antioquia's bloated bureaucracy while expanding public school availability more in two years than in the previous decade.⁷⁹ Against the rampant lawlessness that beset Colombia and cost his father's life,⁸⁰ Uribe instituted a radio-linked community watch system called *convivir*.⁸¹ This act, although soon rescinded, would haunt him the remainder of his political life. Persistent political rumors suggest that *convivir* provided the impetus and covert support for the murderous paramilitaries. In 2002, surfing a wave of popular discontent with escalating violence and lawlessness, the Colombian people elected Alvaro Uribe Velez President. He had a clear mandate to win Colombia back from the brink of anarchy.

Uribe took office at perhaps Colombia's darkest hour. The US decertified the country in 1996 and 1997 for insufficient action against illegal drugs, hampering aid and trade.⁸² President Samper was tied conclusively to the drug cartels in 1995.⁸³ After 20

years of drug wars, Colombia's dead numbered 35,000 in the 1990s alone. The increasingly bloody dispute with the Medellin Cartel saw a loaded passenger airliner brought down with a bomb and the *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad* (DAS, a central intelligence and law enforcement entity) destroyed with a 1,000-pound truck bomb.⁸⁴ In 1998, the US government estimated Colombia's illegal drug income totaled four billion dollars, fully five percent of the Colombian gross domestic product.⁸⁵ Over one million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) increased annually by 100,000.⁸⁶ In an attempt to initiate negotiations, President Pastrana responded to a FARC request by ceding one third of the country to their control in a demilitarized zone, the *despeje*, in 1999,⁸⁷ but the FARC refused to engage in peace talks.⁸⁸ Hostage-taking for profit and political gain reached its peak in 2000 with over 3,500 captured.⁸⁹ The drug smugglers enjoyed sufficient autonomy to begin constructing a large, welded steel, submarine on the outskirts of Bogota capable of carrying hundreds of tons of cocaine.⁹⁰

The various insurgent movements active in Colombia were winning. In 1996, the ELN boasted 3,000 fighters who largely financed their operations through extortion.⁹¹ Since 1977, the FARC had definitively and consistently beaten the Colombian government forces in the field.⁹² Between 1999 and 2001, the number of armed FARC forces reached a new zenith of 17,000 fighters.⁹³ The FARC guerrillas graduated to mobile warfare, using large columns of guerrilla fighters, crew-served weapons, and artillery.⁹⁴ As the 20th century drew to a close, Colombia was headed toward utter collapse, victim of more than three decades of insurgent warfare, beset by powerful right-wing paramilitaries, and fraught with illicit drugs. The FARC welcomed Uribe by bombing his inaugural ceremony, killing 19 and wounding 60.⁹⁵

Since Uribe became president and the US funded *Plan Colombia*, the improvement within Colombia has been dramatic. Kidnapping is down from 3,572 in 2000 to 521 in 2007.⁹⁶ Medellin, the murder capital of the world in 1991, had less per capita murders in 2007 than Baltimore or Washington DC.⁹⁷ After data basing and studying more than 20,000 violent events, Restrepo and Spagat cite “unmistakeable evidence that the Uribe government has had significant success in fighting the guerrillas while reducing civilian deaths.”⁹⁸ The municipal elections in October 2007 were the safest and least violent in a decade.⁹⁹ In comparing Colombia now to its dark past, the US Ambassador to Colombia, William Brownfield notes, “The Colombia of 2008 might as well be a different country on a different planet in a different galaxy.”¹⁰⁰

How have these changes been brought about?

Finally, Success: The US – Colombia Coalition

Examining the seven elements of national power (Diplomatic, Information, Military, Economic, Financial, Intelligence, and Law Enforcement [DIMEFIL]) demonstrates the wide range of international cooperation between the US and Colombia and the broad interagency, joint, and combined campaign waged against the FARC, ELN, and drug traffickers.

More than the other elements of power, Uribe wielded military might and diplomatic finesse to restore Colombia. Professing a vigorous new Democratic Security Strategy, Uribe encouraged the Colombian military toward a new, more offensive attitude.¹⁰¹ He strengthened the military by bringing 72 helicopters, a new counter-drug Army brigade, and 21 airplanes to spray defoliant on the drug crops.¹⁰² Uribe initiated

Soldados de mi Pueblo, a 21,000-strong rural security force comprised of local young men enlisted into the Army to patrol their own home towns.¹⁰³

Uribe's military success, although not unblemished, is impossible to deny. The paramilitaries declared a truce in December 2002¹⁰⁴ and an official cease fire a year later.¹⁰⁵ In 2008, Colombian forces attacked a FARC camp just outside Colombian territory in Ecuador, killing Raul Reyes (a high-level FARC commander) and capturing critical evidence.¹⁰⁶ In a stunning operation in July 2008, Colombian special operations forces duped a FARC unit into giving up their most valuable hostages, including three Americans and a former Colombian presidential candidate.¹⁰⁷

As Colombian military forces regained control over the countryside, the government swept in to reestablish basic governance. A "families in action" program improves child nutrition, bolsters health, and empowers women. In 2002, the program served 150,000 children. They aided nearly 800,000 in 2007 and hoped to serve 1.5 million in 2008.¹⁰⁸ A Coordination Center for Integrated Government Action (CCAI) was established in 2004 to coordinates civilian and military assistance to 58 targeted, at-risk municipalities in 11 regions.¹⁰⁹ This is viewed by many interagency specialists as a very well designed and functioning organization that has significantly improved Colombian interagency coordination.

On the diplomatic front, Uribe enacted Pastrana's *Plan Colombia* with the US to fund, train, and assist his military operations.¹¹⁰ During his two terms, Uribe visited the US over 25 times to maintain this critical international partnership.¹¹¹ Internally, offering a diplomatic carrot to avoid his steadily improving military stick, Uribe created a demobilization program to allow paramilitary and guerrilla fighters to turn themselves in

and eventually rejoin society.¹¹² He employed the Organization of American States to verify the demobilization of tens of thousands of illegal armed group members and credits the OAS participation for the program's success.¹¹³ To encourage FARC hostage negotiations, Uribe unilaterally released FARC prisoners into the demobilization program.¹¹⁴ Although the FARC did not reciprocate, Uribe was praised publicly for his willingness to negotiate. When unable to secure hostage releases himself, Uribe took significant political risk, allowing Venezuela's inflammatory president Chavez to enter Colombian territory to secure the release of several hostages. After attacking a FARC camp in Ecuador, Uribe remained firm but conciliatory among his neighbors, especially Chavez, over Colombia's requirement to defend itself against terrorists. Uribe's stance kept the peace, despite some Venezuelan saber-rattling.¹¹⁵ After the July 2008 hostage rescue, Colombian forces showed remarkable restraint when they surrounded a FARC element and merely broadcast a message from one of the previous high-level hostages, asking them to surrender, to "recover your family, your honor, your liberty."¹¹⁶

Uribe also focused the law enforcement, economic, and informational elements of national power against Colombia's panoply of foes, albeit with mixed results. With *Plan Colombia* funding, the Colombian National Police force was increased by 37% to 136,000 officers. The increased Carabinero force spearheaded the rural policing effort and 2,400 highway patrolmen helped restore security between cities.¹¹⁷ Before 2002, some 169 of Colombia's 1,099 municipalities had no police presence; all do now. For the first time in years, no police stations were overrun in 2007.¹¹⁸ To address the burgeoning kidnapping problem, the US trained special Police and Army anti-hostage teams to quickly locate and retrieve people taken hostage. In stark contrast to the

numerous deaths caused during previous rescue, only one person was killed during 2007, and that was by a non US-trained team.¹¹⁹

The Colombian government, with US support, overhauled an antiquated and stagnated judicial system. Judicial reforms begun by region in the 1990s bringing oral testimony into court were recently completed throughout the country,¹²⁰ but have already demonstrated results. Cases now move from arrest to verdict in months instead of years.¹²¹ The old system required five years to bring a case to trial and yielded convictions only 60 percent of all cases. The new system averages only one year to bring a case to trial with an 80 percent conviction rate.¹²² To relieve the court system of backlogged, lesser complaints, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) created 45 “justice houses” whose trained conciliators managed over seven million cases. USAID also trained 1,600 public defenders.¹²³

Recognizing the lingering shortcomings of Colombia’s judicial system – and the fearful regard Colombian criminals held for US courts and prisons - Uribe dramatically increased extraditions to the US, sending a total of more than 600 criminals north for prosecution and incarceration.¹²⁴ Confronting claims of preferential treatment for paramilitary members, Uribe extradited 14 of the most notorious paramilitary leaders when they failed to meet the terms of their demobilization agreement.¹²⁵

Uribe has also encouraged strong, independent judicial oversight of the government. While staunchly maintaining his own innocence, Uribe has not interfered while more than 70 members of the Colombian Congress, including his own cousin, have come under police investigation for possible ties to the paramilitary.¹²⁶

The Colombian government earned praise from the OAS' Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACtHR) for firm action taken against human rights violations, specifically extra-judicial killings. Complaints about labor leaders being killed have allowed opponents of Colombia in the US Congress to stop the approval process for a US Free Trade Agreement. The issue even entered into the 2008 presidential debates.¹²⁷ These complaints appear out dated. A new unit lead by the Colombian Attorney General dedicates 13 prosecutors and 75 investigators against this problem, focusing on 187 "priority cases."¹²⁸ An \$11 million protection program provides special security to 1,500 trade unionists in 2006. Nobody enrolled in the program was killed.¹²⁹

Since enacting *Plan Colombia*, the government dramatically revived democracy. The 1998 *despeje* ceded approximately one third of the country to Marxist guerrilla control,¹³⁰ preventing elections in many municipalities through 2003. The October 2007 elections saw new voter registration increase by 55 percent. Although still a painful figure, the 26 murdered candidates in 2007 represented a 50 percent decrease from 1997.¹³¹ By 2008 the government could boast "a legitimate state presence in all of Colombia's 1,099 municipalities."¹³²

The "drug war" has not reduced trafficking despite cracking the cartels, extraditing hundreds of drug producers and smugglers to the US, and spraying coca fields for years. Colombia still exports more cocaine than any country in the world, even more than before *Plan Colombia* was enacted.¹³³ Due to higher crop yields, the United Nations estimated that Colombia could produce 30 tons more cocaine in 2006 than in 2002.¹³⁴

Although Colombian elites have never ceded coercive taxation capability to the state, Uribe correctly gauged their support and successfully increased their taxes to match US aid with another \$800 million, to pay for the war.¹³⁵ The war tax focused on wealthy people and businesses,¹³⁶ involving a segment of society that had previously been relatively immune from the impact of the insurgency. Nonetheless, researchers Bustamante and Chaskel argue that despite tax increases, Colombian “tax collection as a percentage of gross domestic productivity is still only at 17 percent, far below average in developed countries.”¹³⁷

Uribe has been unable to secure a US free trade agreement. This is significant even if, as Cynthia Arnson of the Woodrow Wilson Institute noted, the agreement’s “symbolic importance … exceeds economic benefits.”¹³⁸ Uribe maintained critical peace with Venezuela. Colombia’s Venezuela trade almost doubled in 2007, reaching \$5 billion.¹³⁹ Although unable to reduce illegal drug profits by the FARC and other groups, Uribe undermined the FARC’s popular support by reducing unemployment from 16 percent to 13 percent and slashing inflation from 18 percent to 5 percent.¹⁴⁰ Improved security boosted economic activity. In 2001, a primary oil pipeline bringing export petroleum to the coast was attacked 170 times and shut down for 200 days. In 2007, the pipeline was attacked only once.¹⁴¹

Uribe deftly managed information and intelligence. Internally, Uribe holds weekly community councils throughout the country, demonstrating great bravery and confidence by travelling in person to hear his citizens’ complaints and attempt solutions.¹⁴² Pilloried for ordering the 2008 Raul Reyes attack into Ecuador’s territory, Uribe nonetheless captured a treasure trove of information exposing Venezuelan

support for the FARC which included offering \$300 million, an oil ration the FARC could sell, and weapon sales by the Venezuelan Army.¹⁴³ After Interpol verified the information's authenticity, Uribe judiciously released choice blocks to the international press. Little wonder that Chavez, not long after sending tanks to the Colombian border, changed his tune to stand arm-in-arm with Uribe, proclaiming it was "time to turn the page on a stormy past."¹⁴⁴ *The Economist* credits use of intelligence, including communications intercepts by the US, for the Colombian military's stunning hostage rescue success and their ability to imitate FARC communications and operations.¹⁴⁵

This war against determined, long-standing, and well-defined enemy forces presents several lessons for successful COIN warfare.

Lessons Learned

COIN literature and over forty years of war in Colombia yield several valuable lessons for consideration by COIN warriors in other campaigns.

First, understand the enemy. Reading is helpful, but each insurgency is unique in its own right. Marxist insurgencies share commonalities with other guerrilla wars, but each insurgency must be studied separately. The COIN model for Marxist guerrillas may not apply directly to Muslim extremists, for example.

Second, continuously re-evaluate and adapt. Colombian General Ospina reported that the Colombian Army had to abandon its traditional perspective of war in order to fight and win against the FARC.¹⁴⁶ For example, the Colombian Army's *Plan Patriota* successfully loosened the FARC's tightening stranglehold on Bogota, but the next phase of the operation faltered in Caquetá.¹⁴⁷ The Army regrouped, refocused, and resumed the attack; they now have ongoing successful operations in the FARC's prized

birthplace. On the international front, Colombia must work to establish a shared vision of *Plan Colombia*'s progress to date. In Colombia, the program is recognized for its many successes, but US political circles remain fixated on unchanged drug production and out-dated information on extra-judicial killing. This disconnect directly threatens to undermine the progress made since 2000.

Third, bring all possible power to bear. Focus the full spectrum of national power on the enemy. In Colombia, the FARC guerrillas are the target of military operations seeking to kill them, law enforcement operations seeking to arrest and prosecute them, economic operations seeking to bankrupt them, diplomatic operations seeking to isolate them, and information operations to convince them to lay down their arms and rejoin society. GEN Ospina admits that, in dealing with the subordinate illegal drug problem and lesser guerrilla groups, the Colombian National Army become distracted from fighting the FARC, its primary enemy.¹⁴⁸

Fourth, strengthen government legitimacy. The Colombian government did not actually have a presence along the Pacific coast, along the border with Panama, and in the vast plains of the southeast. Until Colombia deployed security forces and local governance returned into the towns in these areas, guerillas and narco-traffickers were able to rule unmolested.

Fifth, strengthen the population's loyalty for the country. Insurgency threatens the entire country and demands a broad response; it is not simply a military problem.¹⁴⁹ Uribe found employment opportunities for the poor and applied taxes to the rich. His weekly press events throughout the country demonstrate (1) a personal concern for the voters, and (2) his personal confidence in restored security. Thompson suggested that a

properly functioning information service will “emphasize the government’s legality, construction, and results in juxtaposition with the insurgents’ illegality, destruction, and promises.”¹⁵⁰ In Colombia, this juxtaposition is witnessed daily, in many ways.

Sixth, offer the insurgent options. GEN Ospina cautions readers to remember that the guerrilla enemy is also a “fellow citizen.”¹⁵¹ Uribe unilaterally freed 200 FARC fighters from prison¹⁵² with the publicly-stated ambition that FARC hostage holders would commence negotiations in return. Although the FARC failed to negotiate, Uribe still gained by demonstrating his good will in seeking a solution. The population, initially critical, noted the FARC’s repeated failure to negotiate and their proof-of-life video releases further inflamed public opinion against them.

Seventh, “nationalization” must be carefully managed. US fiscal support for Plan Colombia is waning, and faster now under Democratic leadership in Congress. The transition from US supported to purely Colombian operations must be carefully managed to maintain broad pressure on the insurgents, using the entire DIMEFIL spectrum of national power. An overly-rapid transition to purely national funding places enormous strain on Colombia and risks erasing their many gains against the insurgent enemy.

Colombia’s Road Ahead

Despite Colombia’s many remarkable improvements during Uribe’s leadership, his *convivir* connections to right-wing paramilitaries and the human rights violations they conducted continue to raise questions, both in the press and in the US Congress. Hanson and Romero’s criticism is typical. They note a peace activist’s assassination by “unknown assailants” after release from government detention and continued

paramilitary violence long after a declared ceasefire.¹⁵³ Although liberal press, academics, and politicians may never be satisfied with Uribe, there is substantial evidence that Uribe's leadership has significantly improved safety and security for all Colombians. Restrepo and Spagat specify that paramilitary activity (especially killing) decreased during demobilization, although numerous ceasefire violations occurred.¹⁵⁴ In fact, these authors explicitly discount claims of increased human rights violations as unfounded, noting that the human rights organizations statistically consider killings on par with mass detentions and other lesser violations. Restrepo and Spagat also note that, in human rights' math, killing equals detention, skewing results in human rights' studies and obscuring Colombia's dramatic improvements.¹⁵⁵ Nonetheless, Restrepo and Spagat also propose that the inordinately high amount of killings perpetrated by the paramilitaries would merit closer attention by the Colombian government.¹⁵⁶

Colombia must continue to wrestle with its enormous number of IDPs. From a peak of 2.5 to 3 million IDPs between 1999 and 2002, IDP levels decreased as the government restored control and reduced violence. The United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) praised Colombia's redoubled efforts and progress.¹⁵⁷

Justice remains under strain in Colombia. Although the demobilization program has enjoyed several unquestionable measures of success, including decommissioning more than 18,000 weapons,¹⁵⁸ confessions from demobilized members swamped the judicial system with 4,000 investigations for crimes against humanity and 800 new murder cases.¹⁵⁹

It is too soon to declare victory. Colombia remains a dangerous and difficult place to live and work. Deadly attacks on labor leaders have been halved, but not halted.¹⁶⁰ Although the US State Department reports that the “murder rate of union members is lower than that of the general population,”¹⁶¹ this is still too high. According to Bustamante and Chaskel, Colombia’s population displacement is second only to Sudan.¹⁶² Despite recent well-publicized hostage rescues, the FARC still holds several hundred hostages.¹⁶³

Clearly the road ahead has its difficulties, but Colombia has overcome significant odds to grasp for victory and peace. Thompson notes that smaller, more prosperous, and better-administered states have an advantage in putting down an insurgency.¹⁶⁴ Large, rurally poor, and until recently poorly administered Colombia has largely overcome these disadvantages, demonstrating that a firm, visionary leadership wielding the full spectrum of national power can overcome long odds in COIN. For the Colombia-US coalition, the coin has been tossed, the toss is near to being declared a victory. It now remains for the US to retract our hand slowly enough to not drop the COIN, and Colombia, back into chaos.

Recommendations

The US-Colombia coalition significantly restored Colombia as a stable, secure democracy. The hard-won lessons from this protracted war, together with the enduring lessons from COIN literature, provide valuable guidance for US prosecution of other coalition COIN wars.

Strategy is important enough to require periodic review and, if necessary, revision. The desired end-state from the initial plan may be incomplete or incorrect.

The US population must understand the valid military maxim, “no plan survives the first engagement.” The US-Colombia coalition *Plan Colombia* is no exception; years of engagement produced huge but qualified successes. In failing to admit or recognize these successes, US politicians undermine the relationship with the strongest ally in South America. A myopic focus on continued drug production and smuggling serves partisan political goals sufficiently to negate any interest in the greater context. Colombia’s many measureable gains, therefore, are often overshadowed by an inability to reduce illegal drug production and trafficking. Military leaders should avoid defining and end-state so narrowly that other successes will not register with the public or with Congressional leaders.

Redefining strategy and goals is not, necessarily, an admission of failure. Strategy should be carefully and routinely re-evaluated. Reducing drug production and smuggling alone is an inadequate measure by which to gauge US-Colombian success, and masks the greater

Measures of effectiveness require periodic review and correction. Thompson recognized that tracking the enemy kill rate was ineffective; instead, he advocated tracking the number of weapons seized from and lost to the enemy.¹⁶⁵ Colombia’s general staff also rejected a body count mentality, refocusing instead on targeting FARC leadership. This emphasis brought about the first military success against the FARC Secretariat in four decades, negated the public perception of their invulnerability, helped turn the public opinion tide, and hastened their decline.

The center of gravity for any insurgency is the population itself. From the several books reviewed here, Thompson best described the fine balance between prosecuting

military operations against the enemy while maintaining positive relations with the population at large. Humanitarian assistance, civil support, security, and reconstruction operations all undermine the popular discontent on which an insurgency feeds. These operations, often considered secondary, must stand on par with combat operations. Combat can pluck the weed, but good governance is the necessary gardening to prevent its return.

Joint operations are only the beginning; the entire DIMEFIL spectrum of national power must be brought to bear. Coordinated, effective joint operations sharpen the military spear, but military operations alone will not maintain the peace. In Colombia, military leadership helps direct the Coordination Center for Integrated Government Action (CCAI), focusing national education, health, economic and public works efforts to address public discontent and restore or establish loyalty to the federal government – effectively isolating the FARC.

We can do much to elevate an ally's standing in the world by merely appreciating and capitalizing on their success. The US does not hold exclusive rights to good ideas in the war against terrorism or against insurgents. Colombian police have trained Afghan police on counter-drug operations. US commanders should look to experienced allies like the Colombians for their hard-won COIN experience.

Advocating torture caused France to lose the peace in Algeria after winning the war; it cost Trinquier his honor. US commanders should take note. The populations' hearts and minds are to be won, not broken.

A graduated amnesty system linked with a timely and transparent legal system help resolve conflict, expose other underlying crimes, and restore the social fabric of a

divided society. Sadly it took Colombia two attempts to learn this lesson. President Turbay's 1981 amnesty offer to the FARC brought a rare peace and a move toward reintegration. War quickly reignited when the FARC's political candidate was assassinated.¹⁶⁶ With the current demobilization active, violence is again declining, but 1981 taught that such progress can be quickly reversed.

Conclusion

Insurgency threatens many nations throughout the globe. When US national interests dictate, the US will engage, often working to establish a stable and secure democracy and deny terrorists a safe haven. Colombia has 40 years of experience fighting a protracted and difficult COIN war. The US has 10 years of shared experience in this fight. Together, we have every right to be proud of the many successes won, while focusing on Colombia's remaining problems. We should use our experience to inform our actions in other theaters. We should recognize that our allies, like Colombia, have much they can teach us regarding the full employment of national power to defeat an insurgency and restore stability and democracy.

Endnotes

¹ Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, trans. Daniel Lee (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), xiv

² Ibid., xv.

³ Ibid., 4.

⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁵ Ibid., 52-53.

⁶ Ibid., 54.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc, 1966), 21.

⁹ Ibid., 22.

¹⁰ Ibid., 29.

¹¹ Ibid., 31.

¹² Mao Zedong, *On Guerrilla Warfare* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 92-93, quoted in Thompson, *Defeating Communist*, 34.

¹³ Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 34.

¹⁴ Ibid., 35.

¹⁵ Ibid., 38-42.

¹⁶ Ibid., 50-58.

¹⁷ Ibid., 111.

¹⁸ Ibid., 111-112.

¹⁹ Ibid., 112.

²⁰ Ibid., 60.

²¹ Ibid., 90-91.

²² Ibid., 90-91.

²³ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), v.

²⁴ Ibid., 3.

²⁵ Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, 4.

²⁶ Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, x-xi. Robert Bowie, then the Director of the Harvard Center for International Affairs, identified these opposing viewpoints in his introduction to Galula's book.

²⁷ Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, 51-52.

²⁸ Ibid., 43-48.

²⁹ Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, 63.

³⁰ Ibid., 43-44 and 48-58.

³¹ Ibid., 63.

³² Ibid., 64-69.

³³ Ibid., 64-66.

³⁴ Ibid., 66-67.

³⁵ Ibid., 67-68.

³⁶ Ibid., 68-69.

³⁷ Ibid., 51-52.

³⁸ Ibid., 52.

³⁹ Ibid., 51-52.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 56-57.

⁴¹ Ibid., 93-94.

⁴² Ibid., 115-121.

⁴³ Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, 64.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 18-19.

⁴⁵ British Battles.com, "Battle of Crecy, 1346," <http://www.britishbattles.com/100-years-war/crecy.htm> (accessed December 17, 2008)

⁴⁶ Stephen Beck, "The Battle of Agincourt: October 25, 1415," July 15, 2001, <http://www.geocities.com/beckster05/index.html> (accessed December 17, 2008)

⁴⁷ Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, 90.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 62-64 and Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 121-140.

⁴⁹ Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, 62-64. This apparently alludes, again, to torture.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 66-67.

⁵¹ Ibid., 5.

⁵² "Armed Conflict Events Data: Algerian War of Independence 1954-1962." November 27, 2003, <http://www.onwar.com/aced/data/alpha/algeria1954.htm> (accessed December 15, 2008).

⁵³ Ibid. Of a 6.5 million eligible voters, approximately 6 million voted, almost unanimously, for independence from France.

⁵⁴ This acronym is from the Spanish *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, to which the FARC often adds “the People’s Army” (Ejercito del Pueblo) to form their acronym FARC-EP. The author will follow general US and Colombian press custom by referring to this group as “the FARC.”

⁵⁵ Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, 20-21.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 20-21.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 68.

⁵⁸ “What is the Mine Ban Treaty?” linked from *International Campaign to Ban Land Mines*, www.icbl.org/tools (accessed December 16, 2006). The treaty is formally titled, “The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction,” and also referred to as the “Ottawa Convention.”

⁵⁹ “States Parties,” linked from *International Campaign to Ban Land Mines*, <http://www.icbl.org/treaty/members> (accessed December 17, 2008). Colombia is party to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

⁶⁰ Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 49. Thompson makes a convincing argument, using tables demonstrating the growing strength of Vietnamese insurgents and decreasing strength of Malayan insurgents through time. He credits these trends as accurate measures of the wars’ final outcomes.

⁶¹ Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, 107-109.

⁶² Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, 8-79.

⁶³ Robert L. Scheina, *Latin America’s Wars-Volume II: The Age of the Professional Soldier 1900-2001* (Dulles, VA: Brassey's, Inc., 2003), xxiv. Scheina sets the stage for the entire South American continent in this manner, and then repeats the themes in discussing Colombia in particular on page 79.

⁶⁴ Scheina, *Latin America’s Wars-Volume II: The Age of the Professional Soldier 1900-2001*, 189-190.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 191.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 195. Sheina sites 200,000 people who fled their homes from 1948-1951 alone. *La Violencia* would continue until 1964.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 79.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 79.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 271.

⁷⁰ Stephanie Hanson, "FARC, ELN: Colombia's Left-Wing Guerrillas," 11 March 2008, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9272/> (accessed October 11, 2008).

⁷¹ These included 19th of April Movement (M-19) and the People's Liberation Army (EPL). M-19 began their national campaign by stealing the sword of Simon Bolivar, the liberator and patriarch of La Gran Colombia. M-19 is best remembered for the bold seizure of the Colombian Palace of Justice, which the Colombian Army recaptured in a bloody attack with ground troops, a tank, and tragic loss of life). M-19 was eventually beaten militarily and allowed to form a political party. The EPL eventually negotiated a peace settlement. See: Lincoln P. Bloomfield and Allen Moulton, "Cascon Case COL: Colombia (M-19) 1974-90," 2000, http://web.mit.edu/cascon/cases/case_col.html (accessed October 11, 2008) and "Ejercito Popular de Liberacion (EPL)," August 10, 2006, <http://www.janes.com/extracts/extract/jwit/jwit0045.html> (accessed October 11, 2008).

⁷² Scheina, *Latin America's Wars-Volume II: The Age of the Professional Soldier 1900-2001*, 355-356.

⁷³ Ibid., 373. See also Paul Eddy, *The Cocaine Wars* (New York: Bantam, 1989).

⁷⁴ Ibid., 375. The various paramilitary groups would unite in the 1980s under the banner United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) and become identified by the US as a terrorist organization.

⁷⁵ Jorge A. Restrepo and Michael Spagat, "Colombia's Tipping Point," *Survival* 47, no. 2 (June 2005): 131-152, in ProQuest (accessed October 9, 2008).

⁷⁶ Scheina, *Latin America's Wars-Volume II: The Age of the Professional Soldier 1900-2001*, 356.

⁷⁷ Michael Evans, "U.S. Intelligence listed Colombian President Uribe Among 'Important Colombian Narco-Traffickers' in 1991: Then Senator 'Dedicated to Collaboration with the Medellin Cartel at High Government Levels,'" August 2, 2004, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB131/index.html> (accessed October 10, 2008). The website contains what purports to be the redacted version of a 1991 Initial Intelligence Report, citing then-Senator Uribe for involvement with Pablo Escobar. Uribe's official denial is included. Uribe's long history of close association with the US against drug traffickers speaks strongly in favor of his denial and against the "not finally evaluated" intelligence information."

⁷⁸ Michael Evans, "U.S. Intelligence listed Colombian President Uribe Among 'Important Colombian Narco-Traffickers' in 1991: Then Senator 'Dedicated to Collaboration with the Medellin Cartel at High Government Levels,'" August 2, 2004, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB131/index.html> (accessed October 10, 2008). See Uribe denial at bottom.

⁷⁹ Mary Anastasia O'Grady, "The Americas: A Colombian governor who makes things happen," *Wall Street Journal (Eastern Edition)* March 7, 1997, A15, in ProQuest (accessed October 9, 2008).

⁸⁰ Robin Farzad and Christina Lindblad “Extreme Investing: Inside Colombia; an improbable journey from crime capital to investment hot spot. Can this boom last?” *Business Week* (May 28, 2007): 53, in ProQuest (accessed October 9, 2008).

⁸¹ O’Grady, “The Americas: A Colombian governor who makes things happen.”

⁸² Scheina, *Latin America’s Wars-Volume II: The Age of the Professional Soldier 1900-2001*, 380. The specific years 1996 and 1997 are referenced in U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Drug Control: Counternarcotics Efforts in Colombia Face Continuing Challenges* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, February 26, 1998) <http://www.fas.org/irp/gao/nsiad98103.htm> (accessed December 19, 2008).

⁸³ Scheina, *Latin America’s Wars-Volume II: The Age of the Professional Soldier 1900-2001*, 380.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 377-382.

⁸⁵ Peter DeShazo, Tanya Primiani, and Phillip McLean, *Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999-2007* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 2007), 5, <http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/071112-backfromthebrink-web.pdf> (accessed December 8, 2008).

⁸⁶ Scheina, *Latin America’s Wars-Volume II: The Age of the Professional Soldier 1900-2001*, 383.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 381. This territory was the size of Iowa.

⁸⁸ “The Americas; “The FARC files; Colombia and Venezuela,” *The Economist* 387, no. 8581 (May 24, 2008): 78, in ProQuest (accessed October 9, 2008).

⁸⁹ Farzad and Lindblad “Extreme Investing: Inside Colombia; an improbable journey from crime capital to investment hot spot. Can this boom last?”

⁹⁰ Ernani Dearaujo, “In need of a fix: Reforming Plan Colombia,” *Harvard International Review* 23, no. 4, (Winter 2002): 8 in ProQuest (accessed October 9, 2008) and “Drug submarine found in Colombia,” September 7, 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/915059.stm>. (accessed January 14, 2009). It remains unclear how the unwieldy craft would be transported hundreds of miles to the sea.

⁹¹ DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean, *Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999-2007*, 5.

⁹² Scheina, *Latin America’s Wars-Volume II: The Age of the Professional Soldier 1900-2001*, 145.

⁹³ Sergio Jaramillo, interview by Center for Strategic and International Studies, Bogota, Colombia, October 10, 2007 quoted in DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean, *Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999-2007*, 5.

⁹⁴ Carlos Albert Ospina Ovalle, "Insights from Colombia's 'Prolonged War,'" *Joint Forces Quarterly* 42 (3rd Quarter 2006): 57-61, in ProQuest (accessed December 8, 2008).

⁹⁵ "The Americas: The Uribe temptation; Colombia's President," *The Economist* 387, no. 8576 (April 19, 2008): 59, in ProQuest (accessed October 9, 2008).

⁹⁶ Kevin Whitelaw, "Inside Colombia's War on Kidnapping," *US News & World Report* 144 no. 7 (March 10, 2008): 34.

⁹⁷ Ibid. Medellin's murder rate was 361/100,000 in 1991; 28/100,000 in 2007.

⁹⁸ Restrepo and Spagat, "Colombia's Tipping Point," 132.

⁹⁹ Michael Bustamante and Sebastian Chaskel, "Colombia's Precarious Progress," *Current History* 107, no. 706 (February 2008): 79, in ProQuest (accessed October 9, 2008).

¹⁰⁰ Whitelaw, "Inside Colombia's War on Kidnapping," 34.

¹⁰¹ Restrepo and Spagat, "Colombia's Tipping Point," 136.

¹⁰² "The Americas: Plan Colombia – the sequel, Colombia and the United States," *The Economist* 368 no. 8338 (August 23, 2003): 42, in ProQuest (accessed October 2, 2008).

¹⁰³ DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean, *Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999-2007*, 12. This directly heightened security, obviously, but also indirectly by providing rural employment which helps deny the FARC potential recruits.

¹⁰⁴ Restrepo and Spagat, "Colombia's Tipping Point," 136.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 140.

¹⁰⁶ "The Americas: The Uribe temptation; Colombia's President," *The Economist* 387.

¹⁰⁷ "The Americas: Uribe's Hostage Triumph; Colombia," *The Economist* 388, no. 8587 (July 5, 2008) in ProQuest (accessed October 9, 2008).

¹⁰⁸ DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean, *Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999-2007*, 45.

¹⁰⁹ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Drug Control: Counternarcotics Efforts in Colombia Face Continuing Challenges* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, February 26, 1998): 19-20, <http://www.fas.org/irp/gao/nsiad98103.htm> (accessed December 19, 2008). The CCAI is also described in James L. Roberts and Ray Walser, "Losing Latin America? A Protectionist Congress is Destroying U.S. Credibility," April 15, 2008, <http://www.heritage.org/research/LatinAmerica/wm1890.cfm> (accessed December 8, 2008)

¹¹⁰ "The Americas: Plan Colombia – the sequel, Colombia and the United States."

¹¹¹ Farzad and Lindblad "Extreme Investing: Inside Colombia; an improbable journey from crime capital to investment hot spot. Can this boom last?"

¹¹² Bustamante and Chaskel, "Colombia's Precarious Progress," 80. The program is similar to South Africa's truth commissions but also includes rehabilitation, with 18-24 months of training included for demobilized members.

¹¹³ Amparo Trujillo, "Alvaro Uribe Seeks Justice and Peace," *Americas* 59, no. 5 (September/October 2007): 17, in ProQuest (accessed October 9, 2008). Trujillo cites 40,000 demobilized paramilitaries. This does not match figures from other sources from similar period. Bustamante and Chaskel cite 30,000 paramilitary and 9,000 guerrillas demobilized as of February 2008. This appears to be a more carefully documented figure in keeping with other reports. Regardless, the process has removed tens of thousands from the fight.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ "The Americas: Love fest; Colombia and Venezuela," *The Economist* 388, no. 8589 (July 19, 2008), in ProQuest (accessed October 9, 2008).

¹¹⁶ Michael Hirsh, "A Smarter Way to Fight; he was the brains behind 'Charlie Wilson's War.' Now his tactics are hot, from Pakistan to Colombia," *Newsweek* 152, no. 3 (July 21, 2008) in ProQuest (accessed October 9, 2008).

¹¹⁷ DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean, *Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999-2007*, 16.

¹¹⁸ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *PLAN COLOMBIA: Drug Production Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance* (Washington, DC, U.S. Government Accountability Office, October, 2008): 45, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0971.pdf>, (accessed December 13, 2008). The 1,099 total Colombian municipalities are cited in DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean, *Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999-2007*, 29.

¹¹⁹ Whitelaw, "Inside Colombia's War on Kidnapping," 35.

¹²⁰ Bustamante and Chaskel, "Colombia's Precarious Progress," 82.

¹²¹ U.S. Department of State, "Colombia: An Opportunity for Lasting Success," November 6, 2008 <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/scp/2008/111642.htm> (accessed December 8, 2008).

¹²² U.S. Government Accountability Office, *PLAN COLOMBIA: Drug Production Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance*, 59-60.

¹²³ Ibid., 29.

¹²⁴ "The Americas: The Uribe temptation; Colombia's President," *The Economist* 387.

¹²⁵ Jessica Bryant, "Colombia: Uribe and Extradition," *Washington Report on the Hemisphere* 28, no. 11/12 (June 18, 2008) in ProQuest (accessed October 9, 2008). Specifically, they did not fully confess their crimes.

¹²⁶ "The Americas: Uribe's Hostage Triumph; Colombia."

¹²⁷ "McCain, Obama go head to head in last debate," <http://www.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/10/15/debate.transcript/>)accessed December 13, 2008). Then Democratic Party candidate Obama expressed concern that labor leaders are being "targeted for assassination," largely without prosecution.

¹²⁸ DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean, *Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999-2007*, 29.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Scheina, *Latin America's Wars-Volume II: The Age of the Professional Soldier 1900-2001*, 381.

¹³¹ DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean, *Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999-2007*, 33.

¹³² Ibid, viii.

¹³³ Stella M. Rouse and Moises Arce, "The Drug-Laden Balloon: US Military Assistance and Coca Production in the Central Andes," *Social Science Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (September 2006) in ProQuest (accessed October 9, 2008). The authors also warn that, "government policies are likely to fail when they seek to regulate markets for lucrative prohibited goods."

¹³⁴ Bustamante and Chaskel, "Colombia's Precarious Progress," 78. The UN office on Drugs Crime estimated that 78,000 hectares of coca in 2006 could produce 610 metric tons, 30 tons more than 102,000 hectares of coca could produce in 2002.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 78.

¹³⁶ DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean, *Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999-2007*, 12.

¹³⁷ Bustamante and Chaskel, "Colombia's Precarious Progress," 78.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 79.

¹³⁹ "The Americas: Love fest; Colombia and Venezuela," *The Economist* 388.

¹⁴⁰ Farzad and Lindblad "Extreme Investing: Inside Colombia; an improbable journey from crime capital to investment hot spot. Can this boom last?"

¹⁴¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *PLAN COLOMBIA: Drug Production Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance*, 35.

¹⁴² Amparo Trujillo, "Alvaro Uribe Seeks Justice and Peace," 17.

¹⁴³ "The Americas: The FARC files; Colombia and Venezuela," *The Economist* 387.

¹⁴⁴ "The Americas: Love fest; Colombia and Venezuela," *The Economist* 388.

¹⁴⁵ "The Americas: Uribe's Hostage Triumph; Colombia."

¹⁴⁶ Ospina Ovalle, "Insights from Colombia's 'Prolonged War,'" 59.

¹⁴⁷ DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean, *Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999-2007*, 13.

¹⁴⁸ Ospina Ovalle, "Insights from Colombia's 'Prolonged War,'" 59.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 96.

¹⁵¹ Ospina Ovalle, "Insights from Colombia's 'Prolonged War,'" 58.

¹⁵² DeShazo, Primiani, and McLean, *Back from the Brink: Evaluating Progress in Colombia, 1999-2007*, 22.

¹⁵³ Heather Hanson and Rogers Romero Penna, "The Failure of Colombia's 'Democratic Security,'" *North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) Report on the Americas* 38, no. 6 (May/Jun 2005): 22-25.

¹⁵⁴ Restrepo and Spagat, "Colombia's Tipping Point," 142.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 143-144.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 145.

¹⁵⁷ James L. Roberts and Ray Walser, "Losing Latin America? A Protectionist Congress is Destroying U.S. Credibility," April 15, 2008, <http://www.heritage.org/research/LatinAmerica/wm1890.cfm> (accessed December 8, 2008), 25.

¹⁵⁸ Bustamante and Chaskel, "Colombia's Precarious Progress," 80.

¹⁵⁹ "The Americas: The Uribe temptation; Colombia's President," *The Economist* 387.

¹⁶⁰ Bustamante and Chaskel, "Colombia's Precarious Progress," 79.

¹⁶¹ U.S. Department of State, "Colombia: An Opportunity for Lasting Success."

¹⁶² Bustamante and Chaskel, "Colombia's Precarious Progress," 79.

¹⁶³ "The Americas: Uribe's Hostage Triumph; Colombia."

¹⁶⁴ Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 19. Thompson was comparing smaller, wealthier, and better-administered Malaya (a COIN victory) to Vietnam.

¹⁶⁵ Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 49.

¹⁶⁶ Scheina, *Latin America's Wars-Volume II: The Age of the Professional Soldier 1900-2001*, 355-356.

